



WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL LDP2 EVIDENCE REPORT

BACKGROUND PAPER

**Local Living Background Note  
(December 2024)**

## Local Living Background Note

This note sets out the background to the approach taken to Local Living in West Lothian. This note sets out the scoring system used to evaluate local living and data from the Scottish Living Locally Data Portal used to inform the evidence base for the future Local Development Plan 2.

### Part 1 - Policy Context

#### National Spatial and Regional Spatial Strategies

The National Spatial Strategy sets out six principles to guide the national spatial strategy, one of which is local living. The full principle is *“We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally”*.

#### Regional Spatial Priorities

Local living is noted within the Regional Spatial Priorities for the Central Belt. NPF 4 states that: *“The diversity of this area, from metropolitan districts to rural and dispersed settlements, will require concerted effort to develop networks of places that meet the principles of local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods, and with fair access to a range of services that support sustainable living.*

Annex C – Spatial Planning Priorities sets out for the Central Belt that *“Local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods, will help to minimise future commuting and ensure jobs and income can be spread more evenly across the area”*.

#### NPF 4 Policy 15

NPF 4 Policy 15 sets out requirements for Local Development Plans: *“LDPs should support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have an important role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system”*.

#### NPF 4 Annex F

Annex F of NPF 4 sets out a definition of 20 minute neighbourhoods: *“A flexible approach to assessing our places against the concept of local living. A method of achieving connected and often compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home preferably by sustainable and active travel methods. The principle can be adjusted to include varying geographical scales from cities and urban environments, to rural and island communities. Housing would be planned together with local infrastructure including schools, community centres, local shops*

*and health and social care to significantly reduce the need to use unsustainable methods of travel, to prioritise quality of life, help tackle inequalities, increase levels of health and wellbeing and respond to the climate emergency.”*

## Part 2 - Local Living Scoring System

A scoring system for Local Living has been developed to help analyse towns and villages and distances to key facilities for daily needs from any point within a place. The scoring system will also be used to help analyse sites submitted to the Call for Ideas alongside the site appraisal methodology.

The table below sets out the scoring system used to evaluate local living in West Lothian. The chosen facilities and scoring system are based on officer judgement.

Score		5	4	3	2	1
	<b>20 minute neighbourhood score</b>	400m	800m	1200m	1600m	5km with mainly offroad cycle path
3	Convenience Store					
3	Post Office					
3	General Practitioner					
3	Pharmacy					
3	Primary school					
3	Bus stop					
3	Local Park					
3	Active travel connections					
2	Glass recycling					
2	Bank, Building Society or Credit union					
2	Café / Takeaway					
2	Community Centre					
2	Library					
2	Railway Station					
2	Sports Facility / MUGA / Swimming Pool					
1	Butcher / Baker / Fruiterer etc					
1	Dentist					
1	Secondary School					
1	Supermarket					
1	Restaurant / Pub					
1	Cinema / theatre					
1	Accessible natural greenspace					
1	Community food growing					

Firstly, facilities have been ranked according to their importance (3 being most important, 1 being less important) in meeting people's daily needs.

Secondly, the score of the facility is then multiplied by the distance score. There is a maximum, total score of 206.

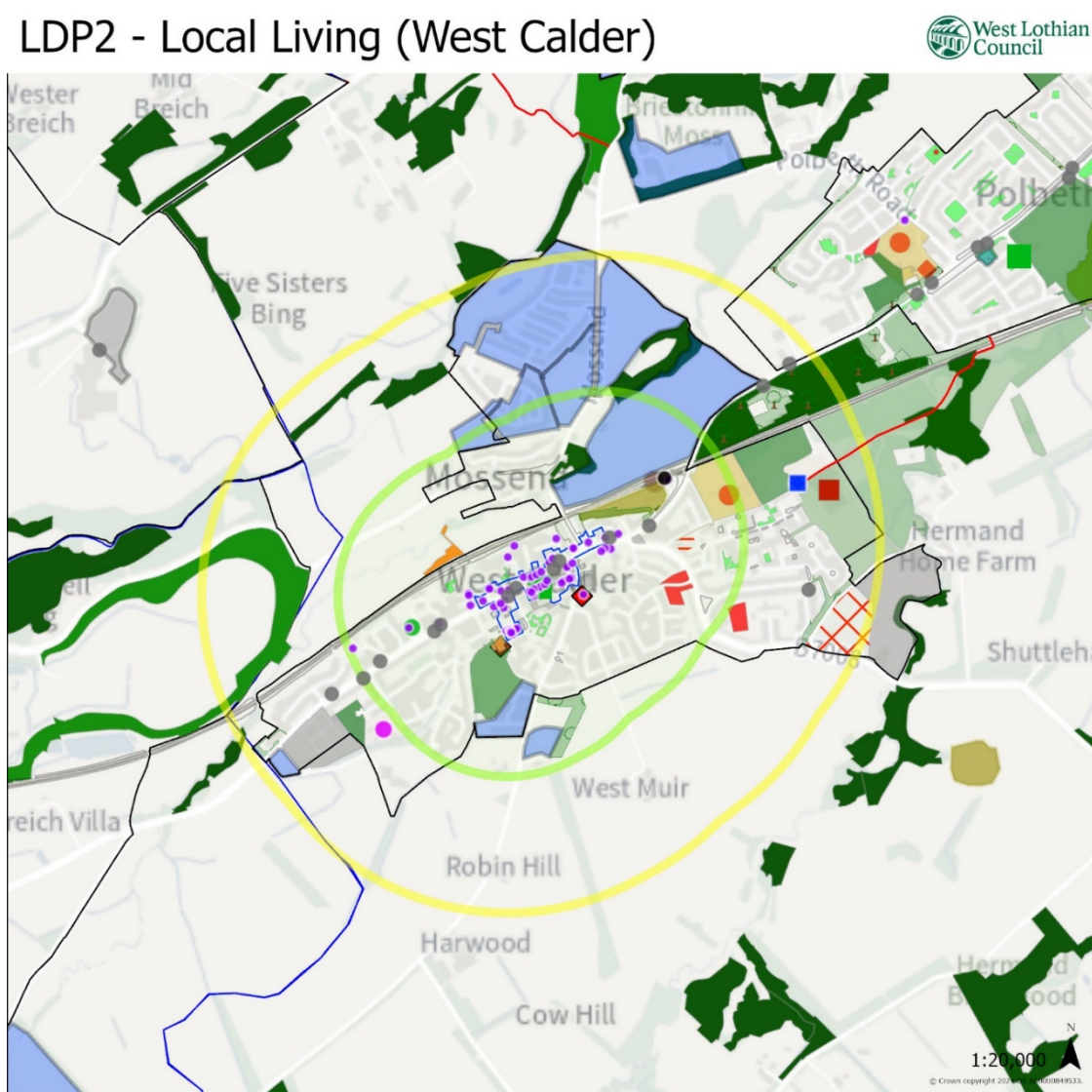
It has been possible using existing data to map the above facilities into GIS. A link to this mapping is here –

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/2f88aafc41244d529ee5e639762f023e/>

For town and local centres, it has been assumed the majority of retail services can be accessed within these areas.

The council's 2018 retail units survey has been taken as the basis for town centre uses and will need to be updated as a Proposed Plan is prepared. Some facilities, for example, a cinema/theatre, will need to be looked at on a settlement by settlement basis until the retail units survey. An example of West Calder is below:

## LDP2 - Local Living (West Calder)



### Part 3 - Scottish Living Locally Data Portal

The Scottish Living Locally Data Portal collects data on 12 living locally facilities. Data is provided at individual postcode level and aggregated to the proportion of residential locations that have access to each domain for all Scottish data-zones and local authorities. The domains are shown below:



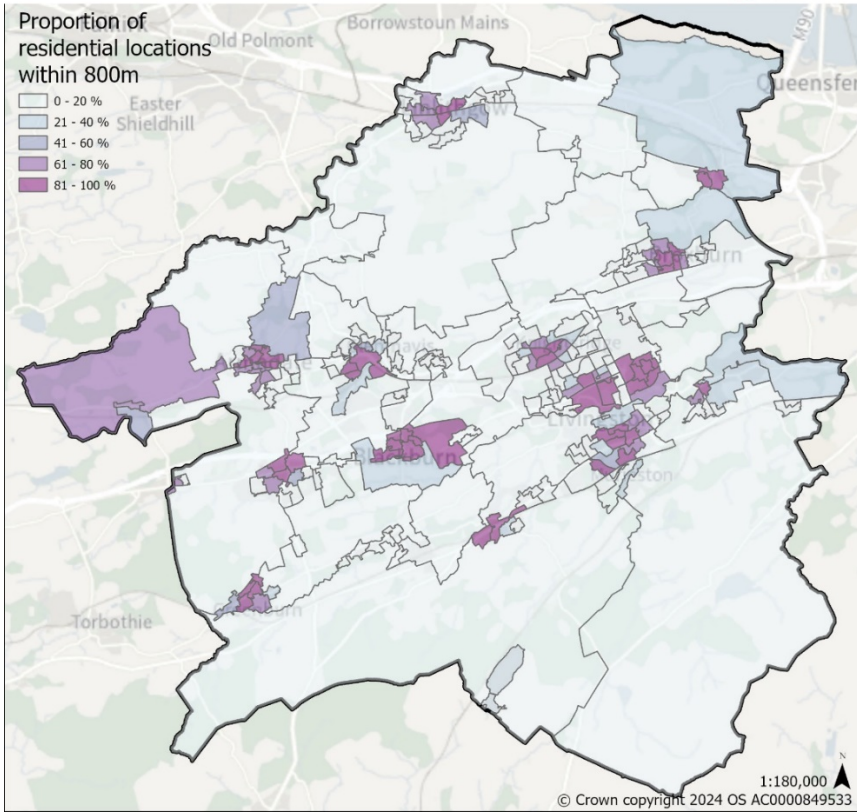
The domains chosen are below and have been chosen based on the usefulness, in terms of Local Living, and objectivity of data, as well as the data already held by the council on Local Living.

- Pharmacies
- Frequent Public Transport (five or more stops per hour)
- Recreational, sports pitches and facilities
- Financial (Cash machines, Banks and building societies or Post offices)
- Primary health care (GP surgery or NHS walk-in-centre)

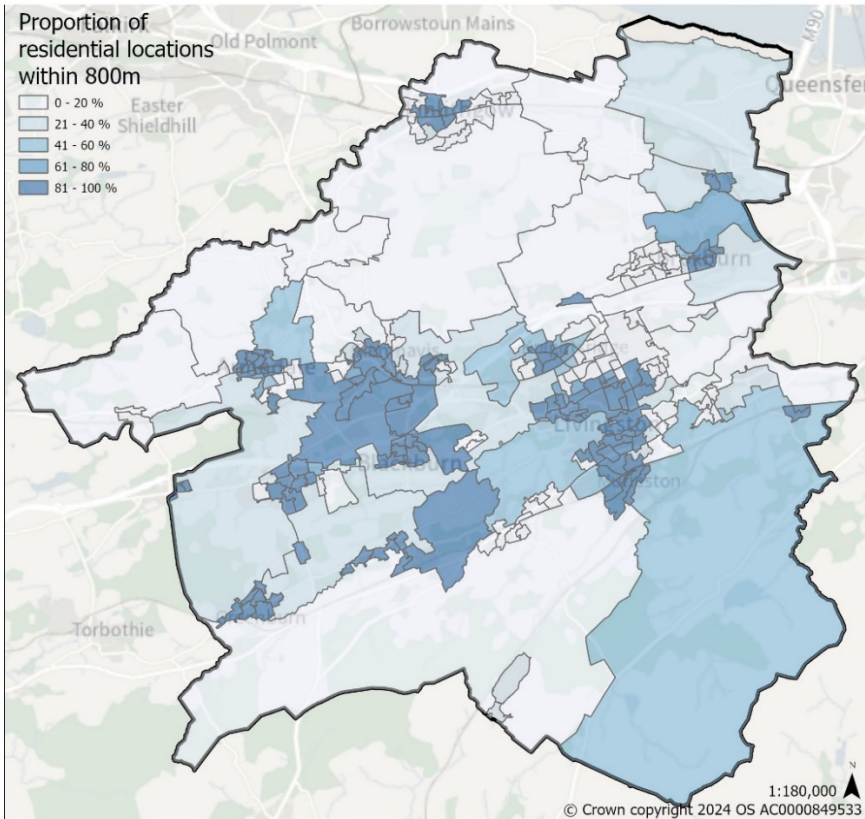
Some domains were not chosen due to subjectivity and what the planning system can control through use classes, for example, healthy food retail. The Use Classes Order does not delineate between healthy and unhealthy food in Class 1A. The council also already holds data on concentrations of hot food takeaway uses in town centres

The following maps show this data. As expected, those living in urban areas have greater access to these facilities and access to high frequency public transport. Rural areas have worse accessibility to these facilities within 800m and worse access to high frequency public transport.

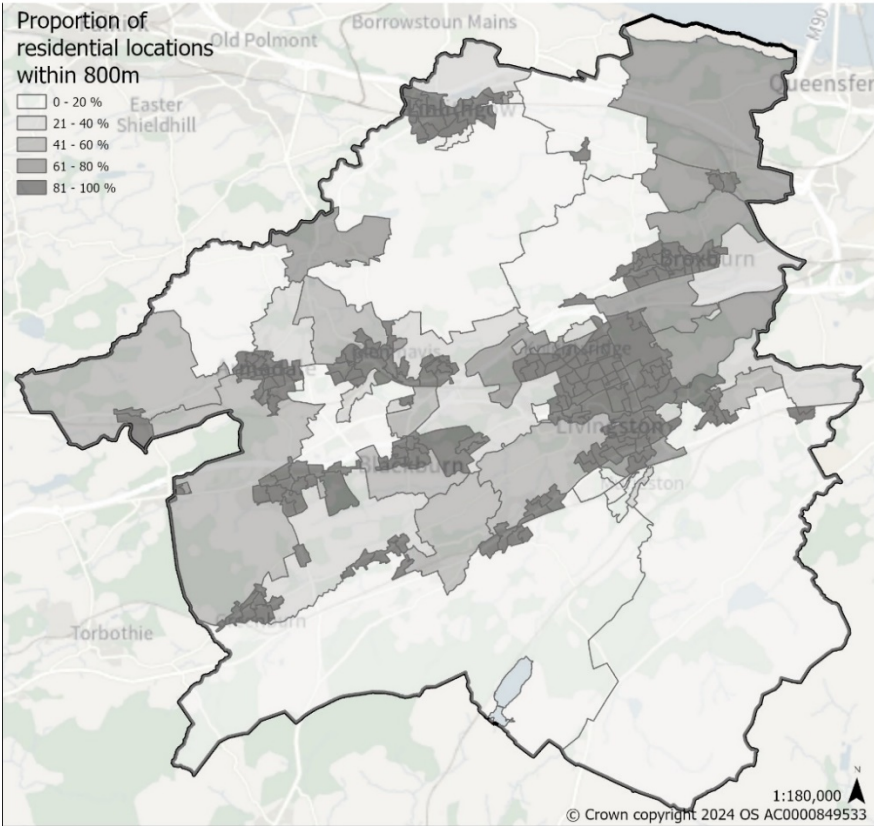
# Local Living - Primary Health Care



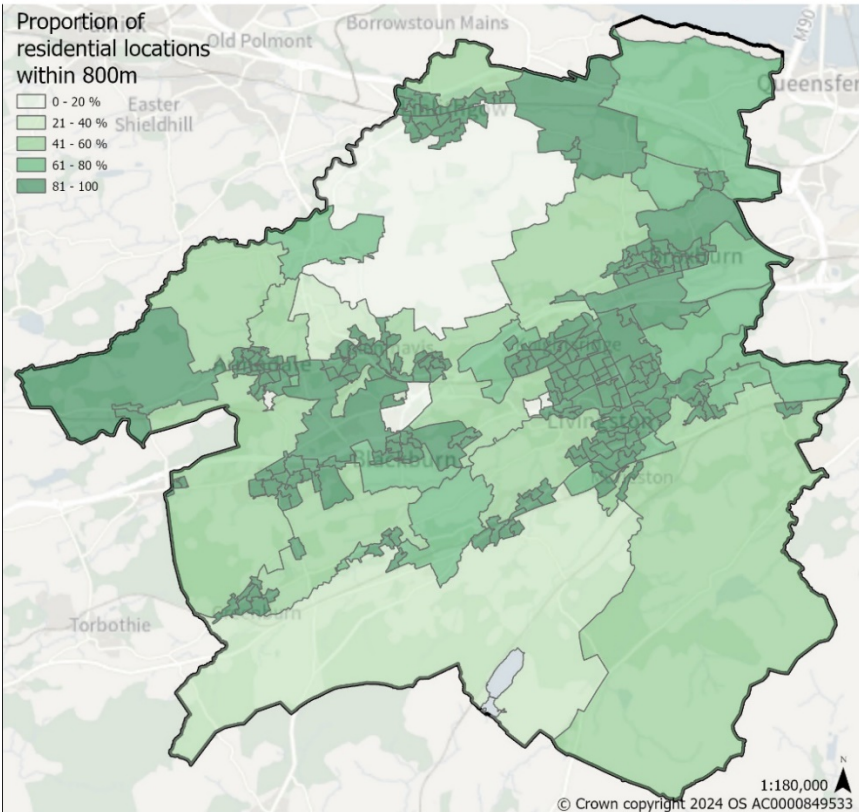
# Local Living - High Frequency Public Transport



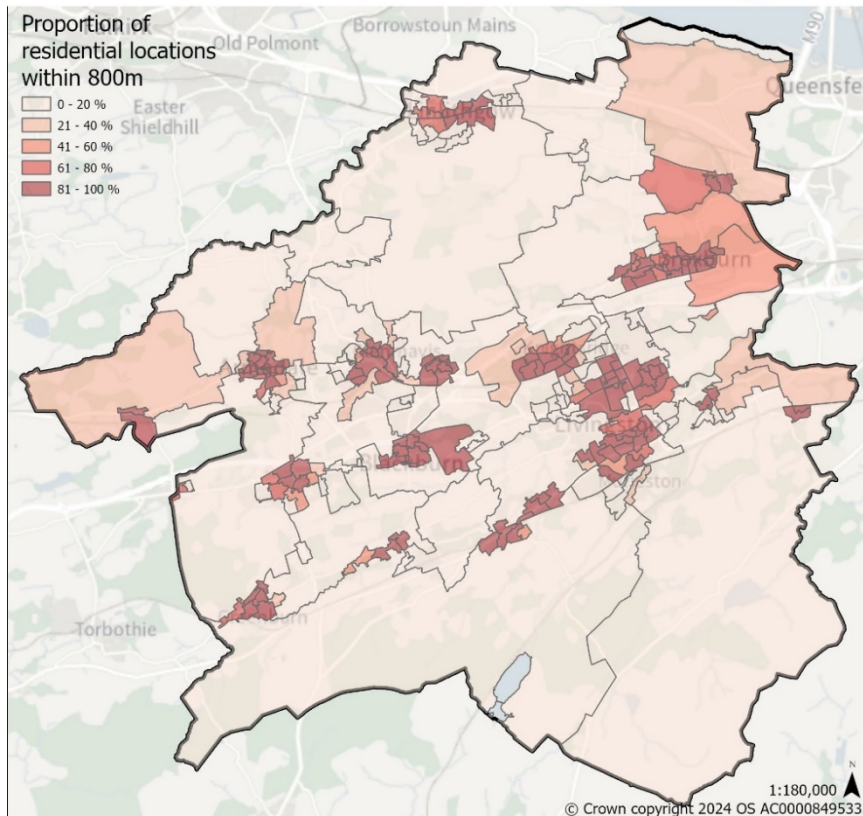
# Local Living - Financial



# Local Living - Recreation



## Local Living - Pharmacy



The above data demonstrates the challenges in implementing Local Living within rural areas. Further analysis is required to link specific rural areas with their nearest facilities. Community engagement / consultation will help to identify where people in rural communities access their nearest services and the Proposed Plan will need to examine if there are ways to better connect rural communities with services, for example, through improved active travel links.

### Conclusion

This note has set out the policy context and background data used to inform the evidence gathered for the LDP Evidence Report. The implementation of Local Living in rural areas remains a challenge and further analysis is required in advance of the Proposed Plan.